THE ULTIMATES²

EWING • KOCH • BROWN

MARVEL

#8

The ultimate team has come together to solve the ultimate problems. Blue Marvel. Spectrum. Black Panther. Captain Marvel. America Chavez. They are...

THE ULTIMATES²

ETERNITY--HE WHO PERSONIFIES THE *EIGHTH ITERATION OF THE MULTIVERSE*-- HAS BEEN CHAINED.

HIS *CAPTOR*-- THE *FIRST FIRMAMENT*, FIRST ITERATION OF ALL THAT IS--IS ATTEMPTING TO *CORRUPT, DRAIN* AND EVENTUALLY *RE-ABSORB* HIM.

I AM *GALACTUS*, LAST SURVIVOR OF THE SIXTH MULTIVERSE, BROTHER AND PROTECTOR TO ETERNITY.

I AM THE *LIFEBRINGER*--AND I SEEK *ALLIES*, TO FIGHT THAT WHICH CANNOT BE FOUGHT ALONE.

BUT ONCE, I WORE *ANOTHER* FACE. ONCE, I WAS THE *DEVOURER*--A UNIVERSAL *SCOURGE*, CONSUMING WHOLE *PLANETS* TO FEED AN INSATIABLE HUNGER.

AND AS THE DEVOURER, I MADE A TERRIBLE *ENEMY*...

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I AM THE *LIFEBRINGER.*

I AM *GALACTUS.*

I AM OLDER THAN RECORDED TIME. I HAVE COMMITTED *ATROCITY* AND BROUGHT FORTH *WONDER,* BOTH BEYOND ALL HUMAN MEASURE.

THE *ENTIRETY* OF WHAT I AM CANNOT BE *CONTAINED* IN WORDS, NOR IN THE FURTHEST IMAGINATIONS OF MORTAL BEINGS...

...AND YET, FOR ALL THAT... SOMETIMES I STILL *SLEEP.*

IF WE MUST NOW DIE--LET IT BE AS WE *LIVED.* LET US SEEK THE *FINAL ANSWER*--THAT WHICH LIES *OUTSIDE* ALL SPACE AND TIME!

FOR *LIFE!* FOR *TRUTH!*

FOR *COSMIC KNOWLEDGE!*

FOR TAA!

AND SOMETIMES I *DREAM...*

...OF A MAN WHO WAS NAMED *GALAN.*

A DYING MAN, IN A DYING *REALITY.*

PILOT-- SET COURSE FOR THE *ULTRAFLOW.*

WE MUST BREAK THROUGH TO *NEUTRA-SPACE* BEFORE--

A MAN WHO SOUGHT THE *SECRET* AT THE HEART OF *ALL THINGS...*

NO!

TAKE HER *AROUND,* PILOT! *EVASIVE ACTION!*

...AND LIKE *ALL* WHO SEEK SUCH SECRETS, WAS FOUND *WANTING--* *POWERLESS--*

NOT LIKE *THIS!* IT *CAN'T* END--LIKE *THIS--* LIFE--LIFE MUST *SURVIVE--*

I--I CAN HEAR THE VOICE OF THE *UNIVERSE--*

--IN THE FACE OF *MORTALITY.*

--CALLING ME--

HEAR ME, LAST SON OF TAA. I AM THE SENTIENCE OF THE *MULTIVERSE.*

AND LIKE YOURSELF...

...I AM *DYING.*

SIMS?

CONNER...?

HOW *LITTLE* HAS CHANGED.

AND HOW *MUCH.*

MY EYES *OPEN.* TOTAL AWARENESS RETURNS. MY OMNI-SENSES ARE *FLOODED* WITH NEW INFORMATION.

THE POWER *RISES* WITHIN ME. THE BOUNDLESS, ENDLESS, SELF-GENERATING WELLSPRING OF LIFE--*PURE LIFE*--AT THE HEART OF MY BEING.

I AM *GALACTUS.* ONCE I *DESTROYED* WORLDS--NOW I BRING *LIFE* TO THEM.

BUT AS I HAVE *LEARNED*--THROUGH ONE WHO SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO *SAVE* ME FROM *ULTIMATE EVIL*--

--NOT *EVERYTHING* LIVES.

SO BE IT.

LET THE WAR *BEGIN.*

OWEN REECE CREATED THE POCKET REALITY I HAVE NAMED TAA III AS A PLACE OF REST.

IT WAS MADE TO BE IMPREGNABLE... UNDISCOVERABLE...

...BUT THOSE WHO KNOW OF IT CAN FIND THEIR WAY IN...

...AND MAKE THEIR WAY OUT.

I AM STILL RECOVERING-- REDUCED, IN POWER AND IN SIZE--

--BUT STILL, THE VASTNESS OF THE LANDSCAPE SURPRISES ME.

THERE IS A SWEETNESS TO THE AIR. OVERHEAD, THE MOON LOOKS DOWN AT ME AND WHISPERS TO ITSELF.

I TREAD CAREFULLY...

...BUT NOT CAREFULLY ENOUGH...

GALACTUS!

ANCIENT *FOE! DEVOURER!* YOU THOUGHT I WOULD NOT *NOTICE* YOUR TRANSGRESSION?

YOUR *TRESPASS* UPON MY VERDANT SOIL?

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD *ESCAPE* THE *GREAT AND TERRIBLE GAZE--*

--OF **ECO, THE LIVING PLANET?**

LONG HAVE YOU ACHED TO CONSUME ME-- A DELICACY TO FEED YOUR FOUL HUNGER!

AND WHEN YOU COULD NOT--

"--YOU SENT YOUR MINIONS AGAINST ME--YOUR FOUL LITTLE GODLINGS--

"--DROVE LEAKING, TOXIC MACHINERY INTO MY SOIL-- MY FLESH--

"--YOU EXILED ME, GALACTUS!

"INTO THE COLD AND EMPTY SPACES BETWEEN GALAXIES! THE LONELY, FROZEN DARKNESS!"

DID YOU THINK I WOULD FORGET YOU, WORLD-EATER?

I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN...

AND I WILL *NEVER* FORGIVE!

UNNH--

EGO HAS GROWN ***STRONGER*** SINCE WE LAST FACED ONE ANOTHER.

WHILE I AM STILL ***WEAKENED*** FROM MY ORDEAL AT THE HANDS OF ***LOGOS.***

BUT WEAKENED...

...DOES NOT MEAN ***HELPLESS.***

AGARRGGHH!

LITTLE GNAT--THAT HURT ME--

THAT HURT!

MY APOLOGIES. WERE I STRONGER, I COULD HAVE ESCAPED YOU WITHOUT CAUSING YOU PAIN.

BUT YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND, EGO--I AM NOT AS I WAS.

I AM NO LONGER YOUR END...

...BUT A NEW BEGINNING.

I AM LIFE.

AND WITH LIFE...COMES FORM.

A TUNNEL...?

IF THAT IS WHAT YOU WISH, DEVOURER.

ENTER FREELY AND OF YOUR OWN WILL...

...FOR YOU ARE A *MOST WELCOME* VISITOR...

...TO MY *GULLET.*

LITTLE *MORSEL...*

ANOTHER ATTACK.

I HAVE SEEN CREATURES LIKE THESE *BEFORE...*

...GUARDIANS, AUTOMATICALLY FORMED FROM EGO'S SUBSTANCE.

AS A LOWER ORGANISM SENDS *ANTIBODIES* TO DEAL WITH DISEASE AND INFECTION, SO EGO CRAFTS *THESE* CREATURES.

A *NATURAL REACTION* TO MY PRESENCE--AND THUS *UNCONNECTED* TO HIS CONSCIOUS MIND...

GOOD.

BEGONE.

THEY'RE... TURNING AWAY?

OBEYING YOU...?

NO! YOU-- YOU ARE PART OF *ME! ATTACK* HIM!

DESTROY HIM!

YOUR CREATURES *ARE* PART OF YOU, EGO--BUT NOT *DIRECTED* BY YOU.

THEY ARE BODILY PROCESSES. UNCONSCIOUS *DEFENDERS* AGAINST THREATS TO YOUR *WELL-BEING...*

...AND I AM NO THREAT.

I AM THE *LIFEBRINGER.*

YOU-- YOU *TRICKED* THEM--

GALACTUS, I...I HAVE BEEN *RUDE. HASTY.* I... I *SEE* THAT NOW.

TURN *BACK,* GALACTUS. PLEASE.

WE CAN *TALK* ABOUT THIS...

...CAN'T WE?

YES.

WE CAN.

HELLO, EGO.

G-GET AWAY! GET AWAY FROM ME!

GET AWAY FROM MY CORE!

YOU THINK YOU CAN TRICK ME?

THAT SHINY GOLD MEANS *NOTHING!* YOU'RE *LEAD!* YOU'RE A *PUNCHLINE!*

I *KNOW* YOU, GALACTUS!

I!

KNOW!

YOU!

DO YOU, EGO?

DO YOU KNOW ME?

...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I AM SHEDDING MY OVERSELF.

LIKE A COAT. LIKE A SHELL. I FEEL IT ORBIT ME, WAITING TO BE RECALLED. EVERYTHING I AM... SAVE FOR MORTALITY.

THERE IS RISK TO THIS.

EGO COULD KILL ME, IF HE TRULY WISHED IT.

BUT I'VE BEEN DEAD BEFORE.

EGO... MY NAME IS GALAN OF TAA.

I WAS BORN... I DIED... DURING THE SIXTH ITERATION OF EVERYTHING.

AT ITS END.

AND I'M HAPPY TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.

EGO? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

ARE YOU *THERE?*

NOT EGO.

ONLY A *PART* OF HIM.

MY NAME IS... *WAS...*

ONCE, I WAS *EGROS.* A *SCIENTIST,* AS YOU WERE.

ONCE...

AND *NOW...*NOW I AM NOTHING AT ALL.

I AM THE GHOST OF A *MEMORY,* GIVEN A FLEETING MOMENT OF *LIFE* BY THE *GOD* I *BECAME.*

I WAS THE *SEED...* THE SPARK THAT LIT THE *PILOT LIGHT...*

...THE *SACRIFICE.*

...

YES.

IT IS *GOOD* TO *MEET* YOU, GALAN OF TAA.

GOOD TO MEET ONE WHO IS LIKE *ME.*

LONG AGO-- *EONS* AGO--A *STRANGER* CAME TO MY HOME STAR TO CONDUCT AN *EXPERIMENT.* PERHAPS TO CREATE SOMETHING LIKE *ME.*

HE CAUSED OUR SUN TO GO *NOVA.* TO REACH OUT AND *CONSUME* THE TWIN PLANETS ORBITING IT.

I SET UP *BUNKERS*-- *PROJECT WORLDCORE*-- TO TRY TO SAVE US *ALL.*

BUT I WASN'T BEING *SELFLESS,* OR *NOBLE.* I ONLY WANTED TO *LIVE.*

I *DIED.* MY *PEOPLE* DIED, AND I--I *BECAME* THEM. AND EVERY *LIVING THING*-- EVERY *ROCK* AND *TREE* AND BLADE OF *GLASS.*

I BECAME THE *WORLD.*

BUT I ONLY WANTED TO *LIVE...*

TO *LIVE.*

LIKE *ME.*

IN THE FACE OF THE *END OF EVERYTHING*-- IN THE FACE OF *OBLIVION*--WE *CLING ON,* WE TWO.

ALWAYS REACHING-- DESPERATELY, HELPLESSLY--FOR THAT LAST HOPE OF *SURVIVAL...*

ALWAYS *FIGHTING.*

ALWAYS *ALIVE.*

ALWAYS FIGHTING.

YOU, THE PLANET-EATER, AND I, THE LIVING PLANET. THE MOST NATURAL OF *ENEMIES...*

NO. NEVER AGAIN, EGO.

WE'RE THE *SAME,* YOU AND I.

WE ARE *BROTHERS.*

BOTH OF US-- BROTHERS TO *ETERNITY.*

AND ETERNITY *NEEDS* US...

...NEEDS US TO BE *BETTER.*

I ALLOW MY OVERSELF TO *RETURN*, ALLOW THE *POWER* TO RISE.

THE WELLSPRING OF LIFE FLOWS *THROUGH* ME...

...INTO *ECO.*

NOT EVERYTHING LIVES. IS IT *ENOUGH*, THEN, TO *ONLY* LIVE?

ONLY *SURVIVE?*

NO. NOT ENOUGH.

WE HAVE TO *GROW.*

EVERYTHING... MUST GROW.

GROWING...

MORE MASS... MORE...

MORE POWER...

MORE... MORE THAN I WAS...

I... AM...

EGO-PRIME!

YES.

AS I HAVE GROWN GREATER--SO HAVE YOU.

ALL...?

SO HAVE WE ALL.

YOU ARE THE LAST TO JOIN US, EGO-PRIME.

COME...

...IT'S TIME TO MEET THE *OTHERS.*

THE *INFINAUT.*

THE *SHAPER'S GHOST.*

THE *PSI-HAWK.*

WELCOME, WORLD-WARRIOR. WELCOME TO THE ***ETERNITY WATCH.***

WELCOME TO THE ***WAR.***

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS GALACTUS IN...

Herb.

Can I *call* you Herb?

I'm the *Maker*.

Call me *Reed*, if you like.

Now, I have some exciting *projects* going on right now. Works in *progress*.

Have you *met* this reality's Victor Von Doom?

Fascinating fellow...

But. My *main* project is a little job I was given by Mr. *Owen Reece*.

The *"Molecule Man."*

Now, nobody knows where he *is* right now. *Or* what he's up to.

Is he behind me? No?

Well. *Wherever* he is...

...let's just say that's *one* job I want to do *right*.

So what *is* the job, I hear you cry?

Well, it's very *simple*, Herb.

I'm going to *evolve* this *entire multiverse*.

And I think that's the kind of thing you'd like to *help* with.

Am I wrong?

COUNTER-EARTH.
HOME OF THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY.

...

YOU'RE NOT WRONG.

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THE ULTI-MAILS

WRITE TO US AT MHEROES@MARVEL.COM (MARK "OKAY TO PRINT")

Greetings, Ulti-Mates! Al Ewing here with coffee, biscuits and another page full of your letters. The new thing, apparently, is stirring peanut butter into coffee. I took a sip of this strange brew and I can report--exclusively for the Ultimates² Comic Magazine--that it's not nearly as weird as you'd think. If you'd like to give your views on Peanut Butter Coffee, send them to mheroes@marvel.com marked "OKAY TO PRINT" and we'll print the best! Now--on with more of your Ulti-mails!

Hi,

Just a quick message to say that I have loved this storyline so far. I thought the Big Bad would be Chaos King, as he too is sometimes referred to as having existed before the universe, but I am finding this new character more interesting. I do have one big question, though: I have been reading Starlin's INFINITY trilogy recently, and from that, I understood that another dimension's Adam Warlock replaced the Living Tribunal, who was killed by the Beyonders. Was Adam the Tribunal killed by Chaos and Order in your story, or was this somehow another version?

Best regards
D. Braime

Well, D., I wanted to hint that that the Living Tribunal we saw meet an untimely end was the Adam Warlock Tribunal--he certainly seems like a new iteration--but I left it a little vague on purpose, so readers could come up with their own theories and explanations.

Can non-humans learn to use the psi-force? Will we learn more about Emmett and how the whole thing works?

Levintwo

Good question, Levintwo! I'd have thought the answer was "yes"--but what that would look like, I don't know. I can say that we'll be seeing more of the Psi-Hawk in future issues, and the Troubleshooters do make a cameo in the current U.S.AVENGERS arc.

I been waiting to ask this myself... The Beyonders were a race of omnipotent beings who were infinite in power but weren't omniscient--but were omnipresent, slaughtering cosmic beings and even sadistically killing off the Living Tribunal. To us fans, this was by far the most impressive thing EVER to see in fiction because the Living Tribunal was the top dog in any comic community--but we see in the "Omniversal" renewal in ULTIMATES that the Living Tribunal was brought back and killed off. Now, how was this possible? Did the First Firmament give them enough power to slaughter the Living Tribunal? Was it because he wasn't fully in tune with the current Omniverse? Or was it just for the plot? And will there ever be a time where we ever see the Living Tribunal again???? Because I been been a big fan of Marvel and its cosmology, and this new issue that came out had me asking even more questions because I am hooked even more! PLEASE keep this series up! Cheers!

Sean McInnis
East Orange, NJ

I'll do my best, Sean! As for your questions--well, everything ever written in a comic, or in any kind of fictional medium, was for the sake of the plot, or the theme, or for another reason entirely at the whim of the writer. But to give you a more satisfying answer--"new multiverse, new rules" was how the Living Tribunal himself would justify it. He'd just explained that the previous hierarchy of beings no longer applied--and Order and Chaos took him at his word. (That said, it does look like the First Firmament gave Order a boost of some kind, so maybe that helped. Who can say? Not me.)

As for whether we'll see the Living Tribunal again...maybe, maybe not. Let's not count him out just yet.

Hello, ULTIMATES Crew!

I recently started reading ULTIMATES on Marvel Unlimited, and six issues in, I am hooked. I'd been looking for a cosmic team-up since the Marvel Now! NEW AVENGERS, and this perfectly fits the bill.

Unique characters that are new to me? Check (loving America). A story that is unique and told in an engaging manner? Check (it's like noble Illuminati). And the art? WOW! Check! Totally hits every nail on the head! You're a super team that has created a perfect super-team.

Thanks for an amazing story,
Arie Boon

Thank you, Arie! Very glad you've been enjoying the book.

Next month, Travel's back on art as we explore the mystery of the Maker--and his team-up with the High Evolutionary! What's their plan to rescue Eternity, and why is Galactus opposed to it? Plus--the Eternity Watch smashes into action...and T'Challa has some godlike plans of his own. Until then--be kind to each other, Ulti-Mates!

Al

ADDITIONAL READING:

FOR MORE ON THE ORIGIN OF EGO, THE LIVING PLANET, CHECK OUT *THOR #228* AND *ASTONISHING THOR #3*.
AND TO READ THE REBIRTH OF GALACTUS INTO THE LIFEBRINGER, READ *ULTIMATES #2*.
ALL ARE AVAILABLE DIGITALLY AT COMICSTORE.MARVEL.COM.

NEXT:

ZONE